

CHOLESTEROL

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Too much cholesterol puts you at risk for heart disease and stroke

Nearly 1 in 3 American adults has high cholesterol. Too much cholesterol puts you at risk for heart disease and stroke, two leading causes of death in the United States. High cholesterol has no signs or symptoms, so the only way to know if you have it is to get your cholesterol checked. Talk to your health care team about how you can manage your cholesterol levels and lower your risk.

What causes high cholesterol?

Foods high in saturated and trans fat increase cholesterol levels.

Saturated and trans fats are found mainly in:

- Fatty meats
- Full cream dairy products (e.g. milk, cream, cheese, and butter)
- Deep-fried take-away foods
- Baked products

You should limit the amount of foods you eat that contain saturated and trans fats.

What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a white, waxy, fatty substance found in the bloodstream. It is made in the liver and released into the bloodstream. You can also get cholesterol from the food you eat. It is important to get your cholesterol checked and learn how to manage it.

Your body needs some cholesterol to work effectively. Cholesterol has many good uses but is a problem when there is too much of it in the blood.

High cholesterol can clog the blood vessels that supply the heart and other parts of the body. This can reduce the flow of blood to the heart and lead to a heart attack.

The different types of cholesterol

HDL

High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol is sometimes called good cholesterol.

HDL protects you against heart disease by carrying the extra cholesterol out of your arteries, which lowers your chance of having a heart attack or stroke. The more HDL you have, the better. Exercise can increase your good HDL.

LDL

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol is sometimes called bad cholesterol.

LDL leads to a build-up of bad fat in the artery walls, which can lead to chest pain, heart disease, heart attack, stroke, and kidney and circulation problems.

Triglycerides

Triglycerides are often present in people who have diabetes or alcoholism. They increase the risk of heart disease.



**Indiana
Department
of
Health**

References:

1. Indiana State Department of Health. (2017). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2017.

2. Ritchey MD, Wall HK, Gillespie C, George MG, Jamal A; Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, CDC. Million hearts: prevalence of leading cardiovascular disease risk factors--United States, 2005-2012. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 2014;63:462-467.

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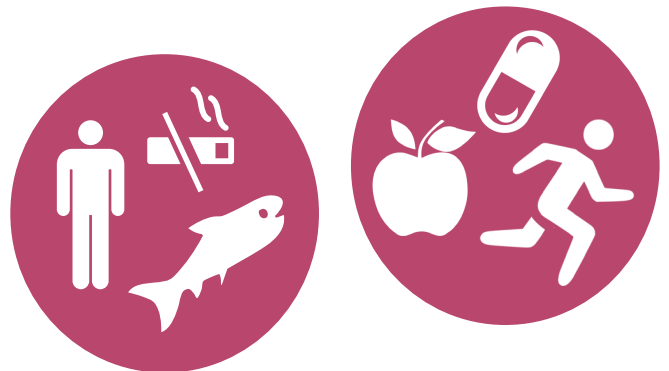
ATP* III Classification of LDL, HDL, Total Cholesterol, and Triglycerides (milligrams/deciliter [mg/dL])†

LDL (Bad) Cholesterol	
Less than 100	Optimal
100–129	Near optimal/above optimal
130–159	Borderline high
160–189	High
190 and above	Very high
HDL (Good) Cholesterol	
Less than 40	Low
60 and above	High (protective against heart disease)
Total Cholesterol	
Less than 200	Desirable
200–239	Borderline high
240 and above	High
Triglycerides	
Less than 150	Desirable
150–199	Borderline high
200–499	High
500 and above	Very high

*ATP = Adult Treatment Panel

Improving cholesterol:

- Stop smoking
- Limit animal fats (e.g. butter, cream, cheese, fried foods)
- Eat more fiber (e.g. fruit, vegetables, cereals, baked beans)
- Eat more fish
- Drink less alcohol
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Increase physical activity – aim for 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity every day of the week
- Take your medicine every day as directed by your doctor – medication can help reduce your cholesterol if it's too high



For more information:

ISDH's Division Chronic Disease webpage: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/24725.htm> or the American Heart Association:

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/cholesterol>